

Interviewer: Okay _____ listen to it real careful.

[Background noise]

Interviewee 1: She just told me _____.

Interviewer: We can set that there.

Interviewee 1: You know, I've told that story about Nellie about 20 times to 20 different people. I think that's the best story you've got.

Interviewee 2: That one about her beating up the colored man _____ at Cabin Creek and going to the _____ –

Interviewee 1: I told that – a little bit of that to Annie.

Interviewee 2: Well, she should record that from you.

Interviewee 1: Yeah. No, not from me. From you. You tell it so much better.

Interviewer: I'd like it – I'd also really like to hear about the 1922 strike, too. That's one thing we're real interested in finding out about.

Interviewee 2: Is it on?

Interviewer: Yeah, it's on.

Interviewee 2: Well, the 19 and '22 strike, my dad worked for the coal company, and we lived in a coal company house. And he was running what they called the drums, and running the man trip up the hill and back down. He went to work earlier than the other men, and come home later.

And we moved out on the Power Road in one of the company houses, with my _____. And the men began to come out on strike. Well, because he didn't come right out that very day, well, the men of course threw rocks at the house, and notes, and everything else. So he had to come out.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee 2: So we went out into the tent in a barracks about a half a mile along 411 now, and all the other men were out in the tents. And they weren't allowed to trespass on the coal company's property. They had state police stationed in _____ Eskdale at that time.

But when the strike started, Logan County didn't come out, and the miners of course wanted 100 percent out. So they boarded the passenger train here, and the train – the train wouldn't hold the men that were on it. So most of the men road on top of the passenger train.

And they went into Logan County to bring the men out of the mines so they could have a strong union.

Interviewer: All through the _____ state.

Interviewee 2: I didn't understand you.

Interviewer: And they wanted the union to spread all through the _____ state of West Virginia.

Interviewee 2: Oh, yes. There couldn't be just one little county. It had to be a national union.

So at this time, the men over there was – they really didn't want to come out. And of course, a battle started, and a lot of men were killed on both sides.

Interviewer: Was that the battle of Blair Mountain?

Interviewee 2: Yes.

Interviewer: That's what I thought.

Interviewee 2: And so they couldn't pinpoint the men, but they knew they were men from Cabin Creek. So a lot of the men were arrested and taken to Charlestown and put in prison. They didn't have any evidence, but they arrested – suspicious evidence. My uncle was one of them. He spent some time in Charlestown Jail. And after so many months, probably a year, they finally come to the end of the trial and freed them.

Interviewer: Where did they have that trial?

Interviewee 2: In Charlestown.

Interviewer: It was in Charleston?

Interviewee 2: Charlestown.

Interviewer: Is that what they called it then?

Interviewee 2: Not Charleston.

Interviewer: Is that a difference place?

Interviewee 2: Where is that, _____? In another state. Charlestown.

Interviewee 1: Is that in Virginia?

Interviewee 2: I don't remember.

Interviewer: Well, that's interesting that they took the trial someplace else. I mean, they probably wanted to get it away from where people would be sympathetic.

Interviewee 2: But that was a very small strike, according to the 19 and '12. That's when it hit hard. They didn't have a union at that time. They was just beginning to organize. The men were in slavery, in bondage, and their families were.

So in 19 and '12, they had the battles on Cabin Creek. Many were killed. Some were buried right here in the graves at Eskdale.

Interviewer: And they were striking for union representation?

Interviewee 2: Striking for union. And the governor of West Virginia sent National Guards, which they called Yellow Jackets, the union men. They called them everything but a gentleman, because they were for the coal company and against the man, the poor man. But they threw the people out of the houses bodily, threw their furniture out in all kinds of weather. They even threw a woman out was a neighbor to my grandmother, just had a baby. It was raining, fall of the year. They threw her out, moved her bed right out in the rain. The neighbors covered her with oilcloth. There wasn't such a thing as plastic then. A lot of women had oilcloth on their kitchen tables, and they covered her and her young baby with oilcloth.

But they searched your houses day and night to see if you had a gun or a knife. You wasn't allowed to have even any piece. Then they threw you out.

Interviewer: Now the strikers did manage to get a lot of guns, though, didn't they?

Interviewee 2: They smuggled their guns. They hid their guns. They might have been ignorant hillbillies, but they were smart enough to keep their

artillery.

And my uncle, he had a .44 pistol. Now he wasn't allowed even to have a shotgun or a BB gun. He had a .44 pistol. And they searched everything. They tore up your house from one end to the other, and dumped trunks, turned over mattresses, featherbeds, and everything. Go off and leave a mess.

My uncle had taken a Sears Roebuck catalogue, which was about five inches thick at that time, and he cut out the center of it and put his .44 in the center of that catalogue, and laid it on top of my mother's sewing machine. And they searched everything in the house, and didn't find the .44 laying on the sewing machine.

Interviewer: That was smart.

Interviewee 2: But they had high powered rifles. They had _____ ways of hiding them, which they did do. That's all they had for protection.

Interviewee 1: Grace, when did the women figure into it? Like you told us about there was this blizzard up here –

Interviewee 2: Well, Mother Jones, she's a historian of the 1912 strike. She was an aged lady. She was the one that come in to boost the boys up for a union. She knew what they were going through, and she went in every place. She wasn't afraid of the devil and all of his angels. And she came up Cabin Creek, and she started at the mouth of it, and she would holler for the miners that wanted out of bondage and slavery, follow her. They did.

They followed her all the way up the creek, and at Leewood they had a company store there. And a National Guard put – they knew she was coming, and everybody on Cabin Creek, women and children _____ alike, followed her up the creek by foot. There was no highway then. It was a dusty dirt road.

And when they got to Leewood, they had what they called at that time a cannon located on top of the coal company store. And they sent word to Mother Jones, if she faced that cannon and come as far as Leewood with all the striking miners and their families, they was going to turn it loose right among them.

And I was a child then, but I was in the march, too.

Interviewer: You were?

Interviewee 2: My mother went, my three uncles, my grandmother, five of my aunts went. We all – everybody marched, from the adults _____ taking their children. Well, it wasn't safe to leave the children, because there was guards in the hills and all over that you couldn't trust your children alone. Talk about violence now. It was nothing compared to that.

Interviewer: Doesn't sound like too safe for the kids in the march, either.

Interviewee 2: No. But anyway, if one had to die, they all wanted to die together, but they didn't have a living, anyway. So they went up to Leewood, and they didn't fire the gun. And Mother Jones was in front, and she called them everything but a gentleman. She told them to fire the cannon if they had the guts to do it. They didn't do it. She even went up on top of the store – they had steps built up. She went up there and put her hand on the cannon, and she called them everything that's in the book –

Interviewee 1: Why don't you tell us some of the things she called them?

[Laughter]

Interviewee 2: I can't think of them.

Interviewee 1: Sure you can, can't she?

Interviewer: Of course.

Interviewee 2: And anyway, she stood in front of the gun.

Interviewer: Everybody that I've talked to that had any contact with Mother Jones says she was a profane old lady, could swear –

Interviewee 2: She did.

Interviewer: –she was obscene.

Interviewee 2: Her language didn't mean a thing, because she was so mad at them. Now she loved the poor people. She was a female Robin Hood if there ever was.

Then after that, she bluffed them there. They didn't do a thing. That made the men and all their families work together, not just the men. The women helped too, and the young women, and young boys that didn't work, because boys went to work then, 14 years old. They didn't have any child labor law.

But after that, the women started fighting for the rights of their husbands and brothers and fathers. So they was bringing transportations out of other states. They would take carloads, trainloads, they'd put together a whole passenger train, maybe 15 passenger coaches pulled by a steam engine, and would bring what they called transportation. They paid everything free, and brought these men, coloreds and whites, up Cabin Creek and other vicinities, to work the mine –

Interviewer: -to break the strike.

Interviewee 2: – so the other men that were out on strike, they would starve to death.

Interviewer: And do you know how they recruited those guys to come – the strikebreakers to come down here? How did they go up into the – they went up North to get them, didn't they?

Interviewee 2: You mean to get the –

Interviewer: To get the scabs.

Interviewee 2: Uh-huh. They went to Alabama. They went to Georgia. They went to every state.

Interviewer: Oh, they went to the south.

Interviewee 2: Yes.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee 2: And they told lies to the men. Some of the colored people were picking cotton, and all they got was their board. They told them lies that they could make a lot of money. Didn't tell them the trouble that was going on. They didn't understand coal mines. Well, they brought them in here, and they didn't know. They were innocent. It was the leaders and the coal companies that were guilty.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee 2: But there was only one way to stop it. You couldn't stop the coal company from putting out the money if they had it to bring it in. They was going to starve the miners out, get them out of the state. So then they started fighting hard, and they brought in

transportation – they called it transportation train. And it was at Cabin Creek Junction waiting on the tracks to be clear to bring this train up to Cabin Creek. Of course, the grapevine started at Cabin Creek, and it traveled fast, faster than a telephone, all the way up the creek. And the time that train got ready to pull out down there, my aunt and uncle and several others – Bill Blizzard was one of them. He was the president of District 17 for many years. His mother and all went to Cabin Creek.

Interviewer: He was a really young guy then, wasn't he?

Interviewee 2: I was nine.

Interviewer: Oh, no, Bill Blizzard.

Interviewee 2: Oh, yes, he was young.

Interviewer: He was young.

Interviewee 2: I've got his picture.

Interviewer: Do you?

Interviewee 2: Mm-hmm. At that time. Well, anyway, they had my aunt, she was pregnant, they had her to walk up to this colored man – they had went in the South and got these colored folks – walk up to him and ask him if he was the one that brought the – was heading the transportation to Cabin Creek. Well, she didn't use very good language when she spoke to him –

Interviewee 1: Tell her what she said. Go ahead, Grace, you can tell us.

Interviewee 2: No, that –

Interviewee 1: You can tell us.

Interviewee 2: – was hurt – that would hurt some colored person if I say that, if they would hear it. But anyway, she talked very mean to him and asked him if he was the one that was taking it up to Cabin Creek, and he said, yes, it was none of her G-damn business. When her husband heard that, he walks over, and he was an Italian. They hadn't been married too long, maybe 10 months or 11. And he knocked the man down, and they both got on top of him. She wore high-topped laced-up leather shoes with stack heels on them.

Interviewer: Whoa.

Interviewee 2: She stomped him in the face with her heels. She tore his ears loose, knocked his teeth out, and called him –

Interviewee 1: It's a Dirty Nellie.

Interviewee 2: They called her – and she was a young woman, a beautiful curly-headed young woman, and she was about the size of Colleen, when she was pregnant. So they called the guards. By the time the guards come, they'd about killed him. They got another man off the train to take the transportation up the creek.

When the word got up there what happened at Cabin Creek, they took Aunt Nell and put her in what they called the bullpen at Pratt, West Virginia, about seven miles above Cabin Creek, one room, 14 by 14, about 21 women in there, no toilet facilities. No bedding, no nothing, a naked floor.

Interviewer: Were all the other women in there for more or less the same thing?

Interviewee 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah?

Interviewee 2: And they'd taken my uncle to Moundsville Penitentiary and put him in stripes and give him a number. Well, I can't tell you how many months he stayed up there, but I know the time approached for my aunt to have her baby, and she had malnutrition. They handed them, what do you call them, homemade biscuits, half-made and dirty, through the bars, and water. That's what they got. And she couldn't hardly get up off of the floor in that cell. All corners was full of human waste.

So my grandmother went to the governor, and she told him that he had to let her out of there.

Interviewee 1: Tell her how your grandmother got in to see him.

Interviewee 2: Yeah, she went, and the doorman wouldn't let her in. She went off and she was so mad, she was going to have revenge and have help for her daughter, so she just comes back real fast and didn't even give him time to open the door. She opened it herself and walks in. She told the governor what she wanted, and like to scared him to death. And she was a talker. I'll show you a picture of her, too.

Interviewer: I guess we know where Dirty Nellie got her character from.

Interviewee 2: So the governor got scared, and she told him, she said, this strike will be over some day, and you will pay for it. This woman's having a child, and you'll be responsible for what it's like. So he just called right away and he had a train to pick her up and take her in Charleston General Hospital, paid all the bills. Jimmy was born there, a total cripple. He was in a wheelchair 59 years, a total cripple.

Interviewee 1: And his ear when he was born –

Interviewee 2: Yes, his ear was loose from his head –

Interviewee 1: Just like the –

[Crosstalk]

Interviewee 2: And his teeth were all deformed. And he was in awful shape. He never did walk. He was very intelligent, but he never could walk, and his voice, you couldn't understand him unless you had been with him all of his life. You could tell – I could tell what he was talking about. His mother and dad could not.

But anyway, the government, the State of West Virginia paid her \$500.00, besides paying all expenses for him. But – then back to the train situation, all of the women, including Mother Blizzard, many, many women that I know of - the railroad up there at that time, well, it's where it is now, but there was a high bank where the state highway is now. There was no road. And from down the creek up the railroad must have been 10 or 12 feet. And the same thing on the other side.

The women and the men got their high-powered rifles, and they got on their bellies and laid on each side of the track. They had to shoot up, you know. And when that train went through, when it passed through up there, they let – one shot fired, they all turned loose.

Interviewee 1: This was at _____ Eskdale?

Interviewee 2: That was _____ in Eskdale. They blow bullets, them bullets went – well, shoot clear through the tender of a railroad engine at that time. The tender is the thing that carries the coal. A tender of steel on a steam engine, one of these rifles would shoot clear through it. It would shoot through one of these coal cars clear through to the other – through the other side, on the other side.

But they literally tore the train up, and of course, you know, they blew. They had on gloves. They waded the creek, some of the ones that couldn't – that didn't go (17:41) on the creek side, put socks over their shoes so the bloodhounds couldn't trail them. They were – they were hillbillies, but they was pretty smart after all.

Interviewer: Did a lot of the guys who were traveling on the train that – the strikebreakers that were coming in, were they killed?

Interviewee 2: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: That's a kind of tragedy of it, that they really didn't know _____ the ramifications –

Interviewee 2: And another incident at Dry Branch. There were some of the National Guards and some of the – what they call Baldwin Thugs. Now that was their names. They were on the train, and when the train stopped at Dry Branch, they let them have it down there, and they shot several. And one of my uncles was on the train at that time, and was at the state liquor store at Cabin Creek Junction, and he was on the train going out to get him a keg of beer, and they shot through his hat.

Interviewer: Whoa.

Interviewee 2: And a neighbor – well, they killed some of them, but, I mean, there was a lot of 'em that didn't get killed, but they were hit. And Russell Hodge, he was a native of Dry Branch, and he was the fireman on this engine. And he got shot through the elbow. He's a retired railroad engineer now. He lives in Huntington. And his – the arm that was shot is about three or four inches shorter than the other one. And that was – he gained that from the 1912 strike.

I've got the picture of one of the men that the Baldwin Thugs killed right up there on the hill. I've got the picture of him, and his grave and stone right up there.

Interviewee 1: I can show you where it is.

Interviewee 2: You show her the stone and his name and the date he was killed is on it. I've got his picture. I'll show it to you. You remember Mrs. Breniger?

Interviewee 1: Yeah.

- Interviewee 2:* She was married to his brother the first time.
- Interviewee 1:* Oh, really?
- Interviewee 2:* Mm-hmm.
- Interviewee 1:* What was the name?
- Interviewee 2:* It's Woodrum.
- Interviewee 1:* Woodrum. Yeah.
- Interviewee 2:* Niall Woodrum and Orville Woodrum.
- Interviewer:* I have some pictures, too, you've probably seen, but you might just be interested. They have some pictures of some of the Baldwin – uh, detectives in here that got shot. I don't know if this came when the –
- Interviewee 2:* Let me see.
- Interviewer:* It'd be interesting to see if it's the same one that you're talking about. Now here's _____. This is – that's all the evidence that they collected after that – after that strike. That was all must of been that kind of rifle, they were shooting up the train.
- Interviewee 2:* Let me get where there's light. I want to see who this is standing. Well, well. I got _____ the book. It's your _____ martial law _____. I think *[inaudible]*.
- Interviewee 1:* _____ You've got to take out a magnifying glass _____ if you're recognizing them.
- Interviewee 2:* Well, I just – I thought maybe I might even see some of my own kinfolks in it.
- Interviewer:* Oh, yeah, you could.
- Interviewee 2:* Is there anymore?
- Interviewer:* Yeah, I think so. *[Inaudible]*
- Interviewee 2:* *[Inaudible]* and the house next door *[inaudible]*.
- Interviewee 1:* _____?

- Interviewee 2: Yeah. He – Bill _____ and _____.
- Interviewee 1: [Inaudible].
- Interviewee 2: The Baldwin-Felts, mine guards killed _____ strikes.
- Interviewer: [Inaudible].
- Interviewee 2: And they were bloodthirsty. They _____, and [inaudible] woman, child, baby. Old Mother Jones [inaudible] now I guess [inaudible].
- Interviewer: [Inaudible].
- Interviewee 2: Well, [inaudible].
- Interviewer: But this [inaudible].
- Interviewee 2: [Inaudible] in the _____. [Inaudible]
- Interviewer: [Inaudible]
- Interviewee 2: [Inaudible]. And here's the [inaudible] this is [inaudible]. Now I know [inaudible].
- Interviewer: That's a great story.
- Interviewee 2: Here's what she said [inaudible]. And I won this little [inaudible] there's going to be one hell of a long bloodletting in these hills, and she screamed [inaudible].
- Interviewer: But _____ story _____ she picked up a [inaudible] she went back [inaudible]. She stood on the platform –
- Interviewee 2: Yeah.
- Interviewer: – and she _____picked the jacket _____up _____ and she threw it out to the crowd, and she said, this is the only jacket _____ I've ever seen decorated to suit me. _____ –
- Interviewee 2: Well, [inaudible] –
- Interviewer: [Inaudible].
- Interviewee 2: I bet she [inaudible].
- [Crosstalk]

- Interviewee 2: That's _____. That's _____. No, she always wore a dust cap.
- Interviewer: Now why did [inaudible]?
- Interviewee 2: Well, _____ on Cabin Creek [inaudible]. Now yes, the [inaudible] people [inaudible]. That's up there _____ house. Now there's a passenger _____. [Inaudible].
- Interviewer: [Inaudible].
- Interviewee 2: [Inaudible] Secretary of the Treasury _____ Bill Hefley, and _____ –
- Interviewee 1: Is that _____?
- Interviewee 2: – _____. Now _____ Frank Keeney –
- Interviewee 1: Is that _____ Keeney's father?
- Interviewee 2: No. Huh-uh. No, _____ Frank Keeney, he died [inaudible] just about a year ago.
- Interviewee 1: Was he any kin to _____?
- Interviewee 2: He was [inaudible]. Now this is the [inaudible].
- Interviewer: [Inaudible].
- Interviewee 2: Was he a Hatfield?
- Interviewer: No, he wasn't a Hatfield, but –
- [Crosstalk]
- Interviewee 2: There's Frank. There's Frank. _____, see? [Inaudible].
- Interviewer: [Inaudible].
- Interviewee 2: Old John Brown and [inaudible].
- Interviewer: [Inaudible].
- Interviewee 2: I think it's in Maryland. [Inaudible]. Yeah, they [inaudible].
- Interviewer: [Inaudible].

Interviewee 2: Go ahead and tell me that story.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah, well, _____, but the [inaudible] and she _____ to them _____ Hatfield, and he sort of had his eye on this woman, and, well, they had _____ between some of the _____ guards. And Sid Hatfield was there, and he participated in that, and in the same battle then the mayor got killed. Well, a week after the shooting was over, Sid Hatfield turned around and married the mayor's wife, and the story was that he had killed the mayor undercover shooting all the bad guys.

Well, the next thing that happened was _____ Sid [inaudible] and so _____ together with the state police ambushed _____ went up there and killed him. A week later, Sid Hatfield's wife turned around and married the state police.

[Laughter]

Interviewer: So you never know.

Interviewee 2: She was in demand, wasn't she?

Interviewer: She sure was. And she knew how to get rid of them, too.

Interviewee 2: [Inaudible] and now I can't find [inaudible] and so they – my uncle would be in here, too. [Inaudible].

Interviewer: [Inaudible].

Interviewee 2: But the Chafins and the McCoys and the Hatfields.

Interviewer: I don't know where they found these photographs _____.

Interviewee 2: _____ in the drawer over there _____ at the end of every one of the men's names there's that RN, and [inaudible] what's the meaning of these letters, RN, after these names? _____ said, Redneck, right on.

[Laughter]

Interviewee 2: But that's no violation of the law, says the attorney. By God, Don, meaning Chafin, says it's a felony, and he's the law over here. _____. Finally, one morning before daylight a deputy sheriff came to _____, hey, get up, the boss wants you downstairs. And [inaudible], boys, I think this is it. If I don't come back, keep your

mouth shut until you get out, and then tell the world all about it.

Chafin took Feeney to a nearby restaurant for breakfast, then they board the train for _____, and on the train Chafin says of his prisoner we are sending all miners' cases to another county to trial. The lawyers are meeting in Huntington today to decide on the county. And I thought you should be present. Jefferson County, in the extreme eastern part of the state, was agreed upon the next day. Three union leaders were released on bond. Charlestown, the governmental seat of the state, _____ Jefferson County, 250 miles by railroad from Logan Town, is an ancient and historical courthouse. Old John Brown [*inaudible*].

Interviewer: _____.

Interviewee 2: They'd been convicted of treason against the Commonwealth of Virginia for this attack at Harper's Ferry.

Interviewee 1: Yeah, Charlestown is right across from Harper's Ferry. That's right.

Interviewee 2: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: It was that John Brown – I think I _____ that same place.

Interviewee 2: And the miners come back, when they did come back, they all were together, and you should have heard the song they were singing at the top of their voice on that train _____, Old John Brown – they wrote their own lyrics.

Interviewee 1: Old John Brown –

[*Break in audio*] (30:00)

Interviewer: _____ what happened in 1912. Did the union men – the operators finally capitulate?

Interviewee 2: The operators finally signed up with the union and give them a contractor. The wages wasn't very high. They had better living conditions because they had someone to look after them. They had a union head they had to go to. If they had any grievances, they get to fight it out with the operator themselves or the mine foreman. They went to their head local, and they'd taken it up with the local union, and then if it was anything very serious, they'd take it before the president of the union, which was Bill Blizzard at that time. Well –

- Interviewer:* He was 7th District, wasn't he? Or was he president –
- Interviewee 2:* Well, he was president of District 17 after –
- Interviewer:* Feeney?
- Interviewee 2:* – Feeney. But then in 1922, they got a better contract. They got more. And that's why coal strikes are now – it's for the better living of the men that works under the ground or even on the top of the ground, that mines the coal, because there's not too many people that prefer that kind of job. The miners are getting very scarce. This younger generation, they don't care for that kind of a life.
- Interviewer:* Sure, but, you know, the mines laid off a lot of people when they began bringing the engines, the big –
- Interviewee 2:* Yes.
- Interviewer:* – _____ mechanized mining machines, so –
- Interviewee 2:* They did do that.
- Interviewer:* – they don't need as many miners any more, as they used to.
- Interviewee 2:* But there's many coal companies now that would like to have more miners, but after the older ones are retired, the young ones don't want to take it up like their forefathers.
- Interviewer:* That's one reason why I think they have to have a stronger union at this point to _____ apply for making the mines safer.
- Interviewee 2:* Yeah.
- Interviewer:* Yeah. So that the young guys will be interested in it. You know, and anyways, it's a good job, if it weren't so dangerous.
- Interviewee 2:* It's a good job as far as pay. It's a confining job. But on the other hand, a man is still a slave. I don't care what they pay you, because you're going to have to live and stay around your job, and sometimes work six days a week. Sometimes they have to work –
- Interviewer:* And they still work _____ they pay you – they pay overtime, but –
- Interviewee 2:* They pay you overtime, but then it's just that you spend your life in the mine, and what have you got? That song, what have you got _____ you owe the company store your soul.

Interviewer: You know, I'd be real interested if you'd tell me a little more about what happened in – I think it was 1921, you were saying that the miners from Cattle Creek all got together under Bill Blizzard and Frank Keeney, and they marched down to Blair Mountain.

Interviewee 2: They marched over to Blair Mountain, not only Cabin Creek, Paint Creek, and all other creeks. That was just the ones that I personally knew of.

Interviewer: But did you know people that marched down to Logan County?

Interviewee 2: I know them, but I'm not calling names now.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee 2: Some of the men are dead and gone. Some are still living. But I was obligated when I was younger not to release their names, and I don't care to call out names this time.

Interviewer: Sure. Sure.

Interviewee 2: Because they were arrested for treason, and tried. They didn't find – they couldn't find enough evidence, and had to turn them loose. But still, what they did, they done for the miners who are working on today. If it hadn't been for the battles they had these men today that are fair and well in the mines with fair wages, better living conditions, better homes, and everything else, I don't know if they'd survive there living like other people. If it hadn't been for the men who fought in the '12 strike and the '22 strike, they wouldn't have that today. And I don't care what they say about the four leaders that's Mother Jones and John L. Lewis. They called them everything in the book. But he stuck with them. He may become a millionaire, but he earned it. He dug coal in the mines of Eskdale. So did Bill Blizzard. He earned his living here, and he knew what it was all about. It was an education that got him a job.

Interviewer: That's true.

Interviewee 2: It was experience. They lived it.

Interviewer: They – actually, most of the guys who are high up in the union now worked as organizers. Now they work – that's just how they are. They were young men when they were bringing the union in. You know, George Titler who's vice president of the union now was one of the biggest organizers in Harlan County, Kentucky.

- Interviewee 2:* Yes. I've sat to at the table with him many times and I've been with him at my grandmothers. Frankie, and Titler, and John L. Lewis, I mean after '22. But they can say what they want to about John L. Lewis. He earned it, whatever he had. He most definitely earned it.
- Interviewer:* He was around a rather spectacular human being.
- Interviewee 2:* He was – he wasn't an educated man. He went to work in mines when he was a kid.
- Interviewer:* Sure.
- Interviewee 1:* Where was he from?
- Interviewee 2:* I don't know originally where he was born, but he worked in the mines here at Eskdale.
- Interviewer:* Did he? I didn't realize that. He also worked in Illinois at one point, didn't he?
- Interviewee 2:* Yes.
- Interviewer:* I sort of thought of him as being from Illinois, right? But maybe he—
- Interviewee 2:* It's probably in this book, isn't it? That he worked at Eskdale.
- Interviewer:* Yeah, that – or maybe it is. I don't – [I didn't remember to look at it.] I didn't have read the whole book yet I don't remember seeing _____it, but.
- Interviewee 2:* The book they take and put sixty years in the making.
- Interviewer:* Yeah, I guess this guy knew a lot of history.
- Interviewee 2:* See, I was eight years old when it started, and I'm 68 now, so that's right. Sixty years, when it was published. 1969. Mr. William Blasco. That was his name, that *[inaudible]*. Yes, so she got on the Capitol Building and it was down on Lee Street then. She got on the governor's mansion, on his steps, and she – bring out the God-damned anything she wants to say. Well, you know, there were so many people, lawyers and dignitaries in Charleston at that time, some sophisticated women. And then *[inaudible]* cause there's no highways up there. No radios, televisions, or nothing.

These people lived up here, and the only way they got out was by passenger train.

Interviewer: There wasn't any roads?

Interviewee 2: No. It was a dirt road. And you had 32 creeks to go through in a horse and buggy.

Interviewer: How long did it take you to get from here to Charleston?

Interviewee 2: Well, you could be down there by noon, down there in the train, you go to Cabin Creek Junction, and then you got another C&L train on the mainline at Cabin Creek. You got down _____ four or five hours to spend in Charleston, and back, got back in here at 6:00 or 6:30. But if you – if there was an emergency arose, which has many, many times, if someone got seriously hurt, like the man they finally hung in Mansfield for shooting the sheriff up there in Mansfield. Frank Lynn was the sheriff then, and he was up there in the store _____ the store now. Of course, it was another building at that time. But he walked up to the door and shot Frank in the back.

Well, he didn't die immediately so the only way to get him to the hospital, they had to get the C&L Railroad to bring out an engine and hook a caboose on it, put the man on there, and, you know, and the operator cleared the tracks there into Charleston, suspend all trains by until they _____. They done that several times.

So one time the passenger train run over a little girl up here cut her legs off. So *[inaudible]* off the passenger _____ they just passed out, *[inaudible]*. So they had to get her to the hospital, and there was no roads for an ambulance, and they just sent 'em out (38:28) right up there _____ through the yard. They had them all *[inaudible]* all the way to Charleston.

Interviewer: Did she die?

Interviewee 2: Yeah. *[Inaudible]*. That's true. It's true. Her mother wanted it that way.

Interviewee 1: Who was that? Remember who?

Interviewee 2: Benny Smith – Benny Smith's first cousin, a little girl. It was his mother's brother's little girl. Griffin. Andy Griffin. That was his name. And his mother was Griffin. His daddy worked for the coal company _____, and Benny Smith was his first cousin. And the passenger train came down at 3:30 that evening, and it was coming

pretty fast. _____. And they – the town was full of business at that time. It was just crazy.

And when they put the brakes on, emergency brake, that train slipped, and _____ – it didn't kill her. I mean, it hit here, up there about Tony's. But it drug her down the crossing. But the brakes – when they applied the emergency brakes, they didn't get stopped 'til they got to the crossing. Then they had to get a engineer to come up here and _____ to get that train off that little girl. And again, she was – she wasn't crying or nothing. Of course, you know, she was in shock. And we had a doctor's office up here, and so they picked her up and her legs was dangling by skin. And they take her to the doctor and they called _____. But when they brought her back, they really _____ had them two little white feet setting up, you know, above the knees in that gallon jug of alcohol. They had a cloth down over the casket, you know, a veil. They couldn't embalm them at that time.

Awful things happened up here, hillbilly ignorance.

Interviewer: Well, I don't know whether it's ignorance or whether it's having that train rushing along at top speed.

Interviewee 2: Well, it was coming downhill, and there's – all the way from the mouth of Cabin Creek to _____, there's about 1,300 feet elevation up there. And you turn a train loose without brakes on it _____ the river wide open, because it's downhill all the way. It doesn't look it. You couldn't think so. But it is.

Interviewee 1: You know, one time I coasted from the top of Cape Ford Mountain, and I had my brakes on –

Interviewee 2: All the way down below Redwood.

Interviewee 1: That's right. Right to the Company Store in Leewood. I didn't – you know, I had the brakes on, and I just – and that's about maybe eight or ten miles.

Interviewee 2: Yeah.

Interviewee 1: And it doesn't look like it's downhill, but –

Interviewee 2: Doesn't look like it at all.

Interviewer: I'll have to try that.

Interviewee 2: But every time – when they take us – I know Jack knew all about the tracks and everything. But when they would send a load of empties up the creek, going to send them _____ so many different mines to supply. If they was going to send _____ 120 empties up there, they'd have to take two steam engines, one in front and one behind pushing, to get up there.

[Dog barking]

Interviewee 2: Come on in, Paula.

Interviewee 1: I think we're going to clear out and _____ have some– (41:35).

Interviewee 2: Let me have a look – where are you going, or where have you been?

New Person: I'm locked out.

Interviewee 2: I told you yesterday_____.

Interviewer: *[Inaudible]*.

[Background noise]

Interviewer: *[Inaudible]*.

[Background noise]

[End of Audio]